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CHAPTER 6

Ritual Theory

ERIKA SUMMERS-EFFLER

Ritual theories assert that focused interaction, which these theories refer to as ritual, is at the heart of all social dynamics. Rituals generate group emotions that are linked to symbols, forming the basis for beliefs, thinking, morality, and culture. People use the capacity for thought, beliefs, and strategy to create emotion-generating interactions in the future. This cycle, interaction → emotions → symbols → interaction, forms patterns of interaction over time. These patterns are the most basic structural force that organizes society.

Durkheim (1995) was one of the first to put forward a strong theory of ritual and emotion, building his theory on ethnographic accounts of the ritual behavior of aborigines in central Australia. Durkheim investigated the mechanisms that held society together from many angles throughout his career; in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* he focused on religious ritual, ultimately arguing that ritual is the fundamental mechanism that holds a society together. Although the aspects of his arguments that rest on his assumption that aboriginal groups are examples of the most primitive human behavior are untenable, he provided a powerful theory of the role of ritual in group life. He illustrated how religious ritual leads to increased interaction, especially focused, intense, and rhythmic interaction.

Durkheim described how rituals generate emotional arousal, which he referred to as *collective effervescence*. Collective effervescence is experienced as a heightened awareness of group membership as well as a feeling that an outside powerful force has sacred significance. This sacred sentiment is attached to the symbols at the center of the group's ritual attention space. Through this association, the ritual symbols are made sacred in the interaction. Both the group and the sacred totem objects of the group have the capacity to arouse intense emotion that has a moral quality; those things that offer positive affirmation of the group and its sacred symbols are "good," whereas those that threaten the symbols or the boundaries of the group are "bad." Durkheim pointed out that groups must come together periodically to engage in ritual to renew both the sense of

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group membership and the sacred symbols that represent the group, which are used as the moral foundation for group membership. The most powerful aspect of Durkheim's theory is his analysis of the mechanisms that generate the intense emotions at the foundation of solidarity and culture.

Durkheim (1995) suggested that his theory of religious ritual could be extended to secular life, and slightly less than 50 years later, Goffman (1959, 1967) took up this project. Rather than focusing on the formal interactions that we often think of as rituals, Goffman illustrated how all focused interactions, even passing greetings, had the ritual quality that Durkheim described. When two people exchange:

"How are you?"
"Fine, and how are you?"
"Fine. Thank you."

they are engaging in an informal interaction ritual. There is a shared focus of attention and the affirmation of solidarity and the symbols of that solidarity—the actors themselves. Goffman illustrated that informal interaction has a moral character that constrains behavior on the most microlevel.

Collins (1981, 1990, 2004) built on Goffman's theory and returned to the more mechanistic approach of Durkheim. Like Goffman, Collins argued that face-to-face focused interaction is the foundation of social life, but like Durkheim, he offered a mechanistic analysis of these interactions and generated a formal theory of ritual interaction. Collins argued that for a ritual to take place, there must be the following: two or more people in the physical presence of each other; a mutual awareness shared by participants and a common focus of attention, whether it is on the group itself, an activity, or a particular symbol; and a common emotional mood, although this mood can change or grow during the ritual itself. If all of these factors are present, actors are then in a position to engage in rhythmic coordinated behavior. If any of these factors are absent, the ritual will likely fail. Similarly, the range of these factors' intensity will also affect the intensity or success of the ritual. Intense involvement and focus result in intense ritual activity.

Focused rhythmic activity generates collective effervescence, which Collins suggested has two components: group-focused solidarity and individual-focused *emotional energy* (EE). Failed rituals generate negative emotions, primarily shame (Scheff 1990). The intensity of emotion varies with the intensity of focus. Symbols associated with ritual, generally the focus of attention during the interaction, are associated with feelings of solidarity and EE.

Polillo (2004) and Summers-Effler (2002, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c), both students of Collins, have continued to expand and develop ritual theories of emotion in interaction by further specifying social dynamics grounded in interaction ritual (process of the self and small groups specifically) and further detailing the dynamics of ritual involvement (see below).

THE INTERACTION ORDER

To be clear, in ritual theory the ritual interaction generates the emotions that are at the basis of social life. Durkheim (1995) argued that the realm of collective consciousness, the group's experience of itself as a group, is not a mere combination of individual consciousness but a *sui generis* form of consciousness. This realm of social life generates "feelings, ideas, and images that follow their own law once they are born" (Durkheim 1995:426). Society is not based in the propensity and capacity of the individual. Rather, symbols are formed in social interaction and then used by individuals (Durkheim 1995).

In ritual theory, properties often attributed to the self are attributed to the realm of the interaction. Both Goffman (1959) and Collins (2004) made it a theoretical priority to argue and empirically demonstrate that situations or encounters are the fundamental causal force on the microlevel of social life. Goffman stated clearly that the self is not derived from the individual, but from the encounter. If the encounter is carried off correctly, the audience members and participants of the encounter will attribute selves to the actors involved in the encounter (Goffman 1959).

The ritual theory perspective on the *sui generis* dynamics and constraints of the interaction order leads to a grammatical style in the theory that might appear to be nonspecific if misunderstood. Durkheim, Goffman, and Collins occasionally used the passive voice to describe mechanisms or give active capacity to interaction, encounters, or situations, and thus seemingly treat what is commonly thought of as intangible as though it were a concrete material thing. This is not accidental, but in fact captures the central assumption of the ritual approach—interactions are tangible entities that have active and compelling properties that are irreducible to individuals participating in them or more macro social dynamics.

INTERACTION ORDER DYNAMICS

Durkheim (1995:217) argued that the act of gathering is a powerful stimulant, generating a "sort of electricity" from mere closeness. When groups engage in ritual action, defined as intense, focused, and rhythmic behavior (Durkeim 1995), they experience the feeling of collective effervescence, which is highly enjoyable, and the development of the conscience collective, which is intersubjective thinking in which the group is perceived as a single entity. This emotional and cognitive state gives rise to the sensation and thought of the divine, which feels like and is perceived as a force outside the group. However, despite the external feel of the divine, the sensation is the experience of the group's own power. This sensation of the external divine is then attached to the symbols of the ritual—totems in the cases in which Durkheim builts his theory. The moral order is created in ritual practice; the totem, the ritual itself, and the boundaries of the group achieve a sacred status. Any transgression against these sacred elements is a moral transgression that engenders righteous anger. By coming together for ritual activity, groups reaffirm their boundaries, feelings of solidarity associated with the group, and the power of the sacred symbols that help to organize the group's activity outside of formal ritual activity (see Figure 6.1).

Rather than formal ritual, Goffman described the obligations each of us encounters when we enter into informal interaction with another. We must take up a line, which is a coherent approach

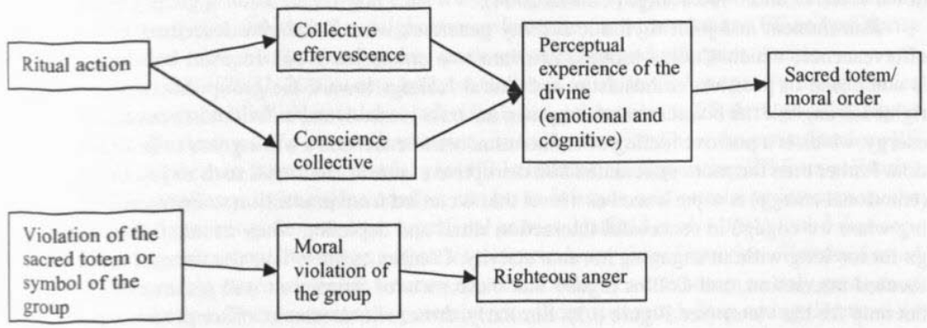

FIGURE 6.1. Durkheim's Theory Ritual Action and the Moral Order

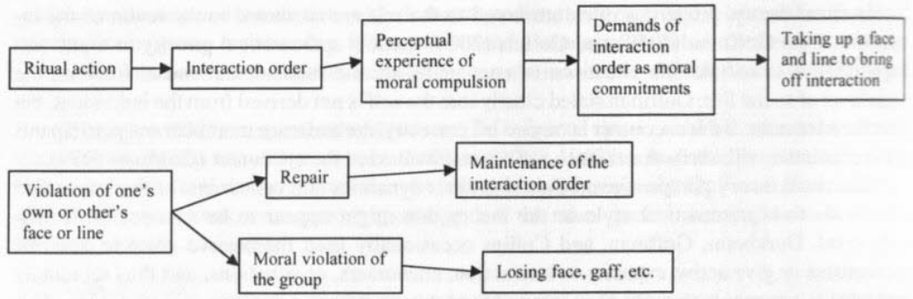

FIGURE 6.2. Goffman's Conception of the Interaction Order as a Moral Order

to communicating in the interaction that conveys our perspective on the situation, including ourselves and the other actors (Goffman 1967). By taking up a line, we claim a face, which is the positive social value that a person claims in an encounter (Goffman 1967). In order for an encounter to come off successfully, participants must work to preserve not only their own line and face but also those of the others involved. Because all participants' lines and faces must remain intact to bring off an interaction, when a person's line or face fails, the individual and his or her audience members will work to repair the interaction through a variety of techniques.

If interactions go well, attributions of selves will precipitate out of the interaction (Goffman 1959). In the interaction ritual, the line, face, and self are the sacred totemic symbols of the ritual. Goffman illustrated the moral obligation to preserve interaction. Emotion, in the form of moral compulsion, is central to his analysis of the interaction order. However, he did not analyze or theorize about the mechanisms that generate the interaction order, thus there is no clear picture of the role of emotion in creating the moral order (see Figure 6.2).

Collins formalized Goffman's work on interaction ritual. He put forth mechanisms that specify how interaction ritual produces the moral expectations of interaction order (Collins 1981, 1990, 2004). To create an interaction ritual, there must be two or more people who are physically close enough to become entrained in each other's actions. These people must share a mutual awareness in order for the ritual potential in such proximity to be realized. Participants must also share a focus of attention and a transient emotion, both of which allow for intersubjectivity. If these four requirements are met, they will create rhythmic entrainment, meaning that participants will begin to move in synch with each other, either in physically obvious ways or through micro-coordination below the level of conscious awareness that nonetheless can be detected by slowing down video or audio recordings (Collins 2004).

Entrainment and joint rhythmic activity generates what Durkheim described as collective effervescence, which Collins broke down into two emotions: group-focused solidarity, which is composed of positive, enthusiastic, and moral feelings toward the group that will change to righteous anger if the boundaries of the group are transgressed; and individual-focused emotional energy, which is a positive feeling of enthusiasm, confidence, and a willingness to initiate interaction. Rather than the more punctuated and disruptive transient emotions, such as joy or anger, EE (emotional energy) is experienced as a level that is carried from interaction to interaction, increasing when we engage in successful interaction ritual and depleting when rituals fail or when we go for too long without engaging in ritual activity. Conflict can also take the form of an intensely focused interaction, and Collins argued that these sorts of interaction will generate EE as well, but only for the victor (see Figure 6.3). Similarly, those who dominate, order givers, gain EE (or at least prevent EE loss), whereas those who are dominated, order takers, lose EE (Collins 2004).

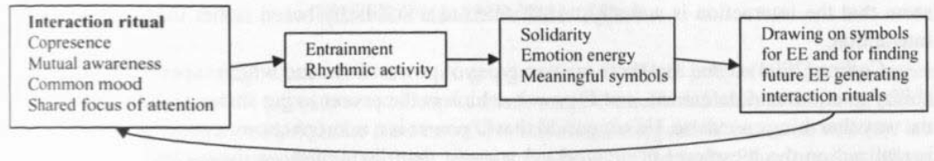

FIGURE 6.3. Collin's Model of Interaction Ritual

Collins argued that we are motivated to maximize our experience of EE and that this is the fundamental drive behind individual behavior, group activity, culture, and networks. Thus, all patterns of social activity, even the most macro, are traceable to the level of interaction where the goal of maximizing EE is realized and meaningful symbols are formed. We move from interaction to interaction, bringing the EE consequences and the symbols created in the interaction with us as we go. So whereas the interaction order has independent situational demands, past interaction determines the level of emotional energy and symbolic capital available to us to deal with these demands. The consequences of the interaction adjust our level of EE and our symbolic capital, which has consequences that reach into the future as we navigate our social world in response to that recent interaction and all the ones that have come before. As we move through time, we create chains of interaction rituals, each encounter linking us to the ones that came before and the ones that will follow. If you followed a single individual's chain over time, you would be able to see his or her level of EE fluctuate and the symbolic consequences of the EE—positive, negative, and neutral—interactions that make up the person's chain. Hypothetically, by accessing the history of their interaction ritual chain, you would be able to predict which interactions they would move toward and how they would draw on their store of symbols to negotiate their changing context (Collins 2004).

In recent work, Summers-Effler (2004c) further specified many of the claims Collins made about the interaction order, in some cases returning to Goffman's focus on the role of shared knowledge in pulling off interaction rituals. As stated above, Collins explained varying levels of emotional intensity generated in interaction by the varying levels of focused attention achieved in the interaction. Based on ethnographic observation of small activist groups, Summers-Effler (2004c) argued that shared uncertainty about interaction outcomes generates the most intense focus of attention, as participants must pay careful attention to the changing context to be able to negotiate the unfolding interaction. Thus, interaction rituals that involve group risks are likely to generate intense focus, intense emotion, and high levels of EE. Formal rituals create reliable patterns of engaging groups, securing at least some focused attention. However, they involve little to no risk, meaning that although they might be sure bets, they will have limited EE and solidarity payoffs compared to high-risk, and therefore more spontaneous and emergent, rituals.

Summers-Effler (2002, 2004c) also built on Collins's work to further specify the dynamics of power in interaction. Collins stated that individuals can gain access to EE through solidarity or power, but his illustrations of power in interaction primarily described how the powerless lose EE in interaction rather than how the powerful gain EE in interaction. Separating EE from solidarity is a theoretical challenge. Although a conflict can be an intimate and entraining interaction, the shared emotion is missing altogether or superficial at best. Hatfield et al. (1994) found that negative threatening emotions, like anger, engender reciprocal, not shared emotion. The dominated party or parties might *perform* shared emotion, but the solidarity would seem to only go as deep as the shared emotion. There remains the potential for solidarity through deep acting (Hochschild 1983), Stockholm syndrome would be an example of this effect, but in this case, it would

seem that the interaction is actually transformed to a solidarity-based rather than power-based interaction.

Collins (2004) stated that there are two types of power: D power, which is power based in the ability to command deference, and E power, which is the power to get things done or to change the way that things are done. He suggested that D power is a microphenomenon, whereas E power is realized on the mesolevel of networks. I suggest that distinguishing these types of power by the social levels on which they are realized might not give us the most complete understanding of power dynamics in interaction. For example, we can think of charismatic power—the ability to mobilize initiative on the level of interaction—as a microform of E power. However, if we only focus on the microlevel, we miss how finite opportunities in any one network's attention space generate mesolevel competition for E power. Similarly we can think of a competition between athletes as a challenge for interactional dominance on a microlevel and an effort to create solidarity with a coach or teammates at a later time.

The multidimensional dynamics of power relationships suggests that the concept of an interaction chain might be too linear an image to illustrate the role of embeddedness in interactions. I suggest that a single moment usually plays a role in multiple embedded emotional histories. Although we can only be involved in one interaction at a time, the meaning of the interaction and the strategic reason behind the interaction might be situated in many interactions in the future, so that a single moment has not only a multiplicity of meanings but a multiplicity of emotional consequences for various series of interactions that unfold from a particular moment. Embeddedness is part of all but the most intense and overwhelming of interaction rituals that have the capacity to engulf us in their momentum and, by doing, so to narrow our focus to a single point of time.

SECOND-ORDER SYSTEM DYNAMICS

Despite his argument that ritual organizes social life, Durkheim understood that people live in a multicausal world. He acknowledged the interrelationship between basic material needs and sacred activity. Goffman recognized the significance of other levels of social life (Rawls 1987), but focused on describing how the interaction order is irreducible and articulating the dynamics of the interaction order. Collins has made the most assertive claim about the primacy of the interaction order, stating that all macropatterns are aggregates of interactions and that such macropatterns reflect the dynamics of face-to-face interactions. Although he has acknowledged that we live in a multicausal world, primarily in writings that demonstrate the applications of interaction ritual chain (IRC) theory to empirical problems, he focuses primarily on the basic motivating force of maximizing EE.

One direction to develop ritual theory is to look at performances as events belonging to semiautonomous realms (Alexander 2004). Another is to bring in systems logic, thus conceptualizing different levels of social life as emergent. Polillo (2004) and Summers-Effler (2004a, 2004b, 2004c) have been developing models of second-order systems that are interrelated with the interaction order but that have emergent properties of their own. Rather than a micro causing macro assumption, we present a picture of interlocking levels. Systems theory helps us to conceptualize how the levels relate to each other, explaining both direct effects and the dampening of effects between systems. With a systems approach, we can still offer predictive capacity, but at the expense of understanding that other levels of social life, although traceable to the interaction order, have emergent properties of their own that must be theorized. This is not to suggest that ritual theory is not crucial for gaining insight into all levels of social processes, but, rather, that there is much work to be done before it is fully a micro/macrotheory of social life.

THINKING AND THE SELF

Durkheim was primarily occupied with creating a gestalt shift where people saw society, rather than the individual, as the primary actor. Despite this focus, Durkheim did address thinking, which we can conceptualize as a particular process of the self. He distinguished between what we are able to sense and what we are able to think. Senses are based in the body. They are immediate, ever fluctuating, and tell us little that is meaningful outside the immediate experience (Durkeim 1995). Concepts, on the other hand, are based in ritual and are transpersonal. They resist change, changing only when they become problematic (Durkeim 1995). Durkheim (1995) described how, once formed through symbolic representation of emotional ritual, society gains the capacity to experience an indirect consciousness of itself through concepts (indirect because it is focused on the symbol rather than the ritual interaction that generated the meaning of the symbol). Because concepts grow out of group activity, they do not share the narrow self-oriented perspective of sensations. They enable a sense of the whole that is not connected to the body, and as such, they are the foundation for abstract and logical thought (Durkeim 1995). Durkheim argued that this capacity for abstract reasoning, so often attached to the individual, soul, or self, is only possible through social interaction.

Although Durkheim's agenda was to decenter the self as the primary social force, he does concede the relevance of individual dynamics, stating that once internalized, collective concepts tend to become individualized. He acknowledged that even though society is the basis for the creation of "our nature," once created this nature is no less real (Durkeim 1995). The individual plays some role in selecting relevant concepts, and thus over time, a personality develops as an autonomous source of action (Durkheim 1995). However, Durkheim specified neither the mechanisms by which this happens nor the secondary influence of the individual on the social order.

Goffman (1959) paralleled Durkheim's approach in his argument that interaction creates the self rather than the other way around, but Goffman's perspective is all the more striking because he focused specifically on the self. Goffman set the encounter and the causal dynamics of interaction order against our folk presumption that the self is the dominant causal force on the microlevel. People strategize, perform, and cooperate in teams in order to present a positive self. The person, who will either succeed or lose in his or her effort to generate a positive self-image, is merely "the peg on which something of collaborative manufacture will be hung for a time. Also, the means for producing and maintaining selves do not reside inside the pege" (Goffman 1959). The self is the sacred symbol of the interaction (Goffman 1959), and like Durkheim argues in *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, the force that generates the symbol is attributed to the symbols that represent it once the symbols are formed. Agency is attributed the sacred self because it is the sacred symbol affirmed in the multiple interaction rituals that constitute our day-to-day lives.

Goffman, however, confused his argument through his complex and not entirely consistent use of the terms. Throughout *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Goffman 1959), the self is used to indicate the positive value an individual claims in an interaction, which Goffman (1967) referred to as *face* in later works. However, he also described strategizing individuals actively creating and vying for positive selves. We are left to ask, "if there is no self, who is doing this strategizing to bring off a positive presentation of self?" On the surface, Goffman dismissed the self altogether, but he was primarily arguing that we need to reconsider the notion of a self that is fixed and similar to our conception of a personality or a soul. Although arguing that the interaction order generates the capacity for becoming human, he concedes that a general capacity to be bound by moral rules belongs to the individual (Goffman 1967). He was not presenting a picture in which

there are no relevant social processes or dynamics at work on the level of the individual. It is an oversimplification to suggest that his work supports the position that there is no self or that important social dynamics do not occur on the level of the self. Rather, he successfully decenters the self and points our attention toward the fundamental level of social life—the interaction order.

Goffman presented the individual as a strategist working to present a positive self, but he did not explain the mechanisms or capacity to strategize. Collins, on the other hand, accomplished the goal of developing a microsociological theory where the self plays only a minimal role as a third-order product of the primary interaction order. Collins (2004), like Goffman, argued that the self is a product rather than a cause of the situation. Through developing his theory of IRC, Collins connected thinking directly to network position rather than internal self-dynamics. Through individual IRCs people learn what interactions are likely to have the best EE payoffs. People operate within an EE market for interactions (Collins 2004), but they do not usually consciously strategize about interaction market choices. Rather the market *pulls* them toward the optimal interactions based on their IRCs (Collins 2004:144). Patterns of interaction create differing opportunities for interactions depending on where the individuals are positioned in the ongoing patterns of interaction.

From this perspective, rational choice theory is useful for understanding behavior as long as we understand both that EE is the common denominator that determines value and that maximization patterns appear on the network level (Collins 2004). Building on Durkheim's original point about the dynamics that give birth to meaningful symbols, Collins (2004) argued that symbols circulate through networks as a result of actors' attempts to match cultural capital in order to facilitate IRCs to generate EE. The patterns of symbolic circulation are the product, not the cause, of this symbolic matching process within EE markets; the symbols lag behind and reveal a history of interaction.

Internal dynamics of thinking mirror these external patterns. Collins (2004) argued, as the pragmatists have, that people proceed habitually until the actor encounters an obstacle; when habits fail, conscious thinking begins. Collins (2004) argued that even such an apparently individualist activity as thinking is a product of network position. Networks determine both access to symbols and level of EE, which is crucial, as high levels of EE are required to creatively integrate the symbolic potential represented in a network position (Collins 2004). Internal verbal thought is a third-order phenomenon based in the second-order networks in which we participate (Collins 2004). We use the symbols that circulate within our external networks for the internal process of thinking. Not only the symbolic content of networks but also the density and diversity of network formations affect patterns of thinking—looser and more diverse external networks generating more abstract and relativistic thinking, and denser and more homogeneous external networks generating narrower and more concrete thinking (Collins 2004).

Networks, rather than individual strategizers, play an essential role in organizing microdynamics, even the microdynamics of thinking, which are usually relegated to the self or the individual. The self has only a limited capacity to direct future scenarios, as levels of EE, cultural capital, and network position all have a more immediate impact. Therefore, past interactions are only consequential in terms of their immediate consequence for EE, cultural capital, and network position. This is a radical departure from the Freudian perspective that has been so dominant in our understanding of the individual (Collins 2004).

Summers-Effler builts on Durkheim's, Goffman's, and Collins's arguments for the primacy of the interaction order, but argued that the self is a level of social life with its own emergent properties that affect other levels of social life. In fact, Summers-Effler (2004a) argued that the self is the key to understanding the process of culture. The self is a system that emerges, over time, out of the competing push and pull of two other systems: the interaction order and the body.

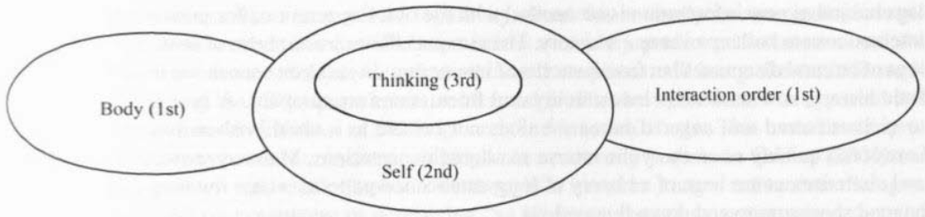

FIGURE 6.4. Self and Thinking as Emergent Systems

Culture is often understood in opposition to the biological processes of the body; it is assumed that our symbolic capacity separates humans from other animals that are more firmly grounded in their bodies. Alternately, Summers-Effler (2004a) argued that when we ground the potential for learning, and thus acquisition of symbolic meaning, in the body, we arrive at the most dynamic and flexible understanding of the self and culture (see Figure 6.4).

Although it has not been the central focus of ritual theory, theorists of ritual have recognized the role of the body and the biological forces in ritual life: Durkheim (1995), psychobiological forces; Goffman (1959), the role of basic drives for social contact and companionship; and Collins (2004), the coordination of bodies in interaction and the physiological arousal of bodies in the experience of emotional energy. Collins (2004) argued for a basic motivation to maximize emotional energy; Summers-Effler went further and demonstrated how and why this motivation is inborn. Summers-Effler (2004a) argued that although we are motivated by self-interest, this self-interest is tempered by reliance on groups. The development of a genetic drive toward social solidarity did not happen through the individual-level selection but a socially oriented selection whereby the group is the selection force for evolution at the individual level (Stevens and Fiske 1995); thus, the capacity to adapt to the group, regardless of specific group processes, has been genetically selected as advantageous for humans (Gopnik and Meltzoff 1997). Possessing a drive toward group membership and the capacity to be flexible in regard to group content means that a capacity for learning is closely tied to the drive for solidarity. Emotions are our primary tools in this learning process. This body-level process works in much the same way that Durkheim's theory of ritual works on the group level. Social conditions arouse adaptive bodily responses that are experienced as emotions (Brothers 1997; Damasio 1994; Schneider 1991).

Through parallel processing, symbols from the environment are attached to the bodily response and stored as somatic markers. These markers create "as if" loops (Damasio 1994:155). When we encounter the symbol again, either in the world or in our minds, the symbol activates neural connections that make us feel "as if" we are experiencing the interaction between our body and our environment that generated the meaning of the symbol (Summers-Effler 2004a). "As if" loops are the basis for learning that allows us to anticipate and navigate our social environment. By specifying the mechanism that generates symbols and claiming that they are, in themselves, strategies, not just tools for implementing the strategy, we not only have a foundation for a theory of how culture is formed but also how it changes, thus explaining the emergent properties of selves and culture without dismissing either the role of the biological body or the structural importance of the interaction order where the symbols are formed and modified.

Like Durkheim, Summers-Effler argued that there are two processes to the self: the sensing process of the self that experiences emotional reactions in response to environmental conditions, and the contextualizing process of the self that forms and updates "as if" loops. Whereas the sensing process of the self is anchored in a motivation to maximize EE, the contextualizing process

lags behind as new information is reconciled with the old. Expectations for positive and negative interactions are built up over one's history. These expectations are not born of abstract understandings of cultural discourses but from patterns of interaction. In children we can see this process with little history, so that there is less stability and fluctuations are rampant. A best friend is subject to vicious hatred and anger if he or she does not behave as a child wishes, but the friendship is restored quickly once everyone returns to shared expectations. Maturity, consistency, loyalty, and commitment are born of a history of long-established patterns where the long haul is valued beyond short-run up and down fluctuations.

Undermining expectations renders "as if" loops useless and leaves us with no social bearing; thus there is a drive to build useful strategies. If we imagine that the self is the process of creating, reconciling, and updating all of the "as if" loops that connect the body to the continual unfolding of particular environmental contexts and that this process is organized to predict and achieve the greatest access to EE, we can see that although the self might be generated by the inborn motivation to maximize EE or integration into the group, once formed there is an emergent drive for self-consistency on the level of the self. The self is born of the drive to maximize EE, but the need to anticipate makes it conservative once formed. We will often hang on to strategies that only make sense within the context of our entire history rather than the immediate context. This is particularly the case for "as if" loops that were formed early and have been used to negotiate many of our interactions. Many of our more developed strategies are modifications of these initial orientations to the world. We can think of these older, more general, and most useful "as if" loops as personal style. As many of our more specific "as if" loops would be rendered useless if the more fundamental personal style were undermined, personal style is a particularly conservative force within the self.

When we update our "as if" loops in order to continue to seek EE, we are engaged in proactive strategizing. Because the goal is to achieve more EE, proactive "as if" loops are modified when there is any loss or unanticipated gain of EE. Because these associations are sensitive to shifts in the context and are easily modified, their development and modification are fluid processes. Alternately, when it seems that all avenues for building EE are closed off and we are forced to develop strategies to minimize loss, we engage in defensive strategizing (Summers-Effler 2004b). In these situations, efforts to control the emotional consequences of interactions are turned inward, and the focus is on controlling one's own behavior in a particular context rather than on moving through one's environment. Defensive "as if" loops anticipate EE loss, so they are unlikely to be updated even when there are significant losses. This means that these strategies tend to be far more durable than proactive strategies. Although all strategies lag behind the immediate context, defensive strategies persist long after they have outlived their usefulness. Summers-Effler (2004b) argued that defensive strategies are often the foundation of self-destructive behaviors (such as staying with abusive partners or eating disorders).

Defensive strategies generate a paradox of reflexivity. They tend to create a narrow focus on the self, but this narrow focus undermines the capacity to take in the subtle changes in context, which undermines the potential for identifying other options. Reflexivity is also diminished when internal representations of dominating others overwhelm internal conversation by shutting out weaker positions, which also limits one's capacity to conceive of all possible strategies of action. Because defensive strategies are born of a lack of positive choice, we could anticipate that those who are most systematically disadvantaged (those denied many EE maximization opportunities) would be most likely to develop defensive strategies. This suggests that disadvantaged network positions negatively affect not only immediate access to material resources and EE but also the potential for building strategies that would enable those at the margins to take advantage of situational opportunities when the opportunities arise (Summers-Effler 2002).

Two types of conflict can generate reflexivity about the normally unconscious proactive strategies. The first is when our "as if" loops fail to accurately predict an interaction and the interaction does not come off as well as planned. Small variations will bring about subtle modifications of existing "as if" loops, whereas substantial conflict between what was expected and what ensues requires the dismissal of old loops and the formation of new. This more drastic process is more likely to become conscious, although not necessarily verbal. As Collins (2004) and Turner (2000) pointed out, much of conscious thought is based in images rather than dialogue. Situations that call on competing or conflicting "as if" loops also generate conscious thought. Membership in multiple networks can often be sustained with few conflicts, but conflict ensues when membership in different networks demands different strategies. These conflicts are not so much about the failure of a prediction as they are about a history of IRCs that invoke conflicting strategies.

For example, consider women who may have "as if" loops associated with work situations and gender identity. In the event of becoming a mother, the chains will likely compete as past experience predicts conflicting scenarios for EE maximization and EE drains—the strategies for gender and work conflict. Although incompatible but potentially equally positive strategies can create conscious thinking, the most extensive and verbally based reflexivity is based in incompatible and potentially equally draining strategies—situations in which is seems that all roads lead to EE drain in one way or another.

The voices in thinking are representations of significant others or generalized others associated with the competing network positions. Although Mead (1934) and Wiley (1994) dedicated great effort to detailing the specific dynamics of internal conversation, I would suggest that the conversation and the grammar of the conversation is a product of the particular social context and history (context unfolding over time) that generated the situation. The more rigid grammar of internal conversation that the pragmatists depict does not capture the flexibility of the thinking process, in which much is visual, and the roles in the internal dialogue are significantly determined by the immediate context and particular history. We could imagine scenarios where the "I" would play a central role in discussion and others where the "I" would be entirely excluded. Network position determines the level of EE that one has available for the internal problem solving through internal dialogue and the cultural capital at one's disposal for solving the problem. This is in line with Collins' (1998) point that network position generates the potential for particular ideas to crystallize at particular times and in particular people.

Polillo (2004) has further specified the internal dynamics of the self. He built on pragmatists' work on the self, Wiley's (1994) semiotic self in particular, by imagining the parts of the self as a network with different temporal orientations. He incorporated Goffman's work on the interaction order and Collins' work on interaction rituals to analyze the EE potential of different network compositions within the self. He argued that internal networks that have developed strong ties among their components can result in essentialist perspectives on the self and one's personal identity, based on an idealization of the past or, at best, a strategy of day-to-day survival.

Such a perspective on the self limits the reflexive potential for envisioning alternative identities and social positions—a dynamic that is particularly damaging for those who occupy diminished social positions with oppressive social identities, especially when the external interactional environment binds the dominated to the dominant and leaves little structural space for the dominated to develop an oppositional identity. When internal network structures between positions within the self become less strongly tied to one another, a constructivist perspective on the self and the social conditions that shape the self is allowed. Whereas a strongly tied self looks to the past or, at best, to the present, it is the future that orients the self when it is embedded in a "cosmopolitan"

external network. Again, this sort of internal network composition is particularly powerful for those who suffer from oppressive identities, as it enables them to envision alternatives, an ability that is central in the process of organizing to create those alternatives.

NETWORK PROCESSES

Durkheim focused on society as a whole, Goffman focused on the interaction order and Collins introduced the potential for ritual theory to connect all levels of social life, from face-to-face interaction to social patterns that emerge over many lifetimes. IRCs connect the interaction order to all larger patterns. Networks are a particular type of IRC in which types of interaction, thus particular transient emotions and symbols, are recycled among overlapping ties. Rather than connections between people, networks are connections between parts of the self that are activated in patterned situations. Network theory looks at the connection between people, but from an IRC perspective; network ties are between repeated significant social interactions (Collins 2004). Interactions within networks are primed through shared history or shared interaction patterns and symbols, so the network connections and symbols are self-reinforcing.

Ritual theory approaches provide the basic motivation behind the formation, destruction, and evolution of networks, thus theoretical insight into the unfolding of networks over time. Efforts to anticipate positive social interaction (see above section on the self) generate networks. If individuals were randomly put in a limited space with no preexisting ties, the process of people relying on anticipation as a tool to experience EE would result in patterns of interactions between people—networks born of individual efforts to anticipate interactions over time.

We can imagine IRCs as though they are time-lapsed photographs that capture the patterns of light made by automobiles at night. From the perspective of a single street, we would see a single stream of light made from cars on this particular street, but from above, we would see a grid of light that would reflect the paths available for cars rather than any particular route. From an IRC perspective, it is intuitive to focus on the larger pattern of interactions over an individual path. An individual at any given time appears as a crystallization of the larger pattern.

Why is the individual so entwined with the larger pattern of interactions? The competition for optimal positioning within the limited attention space that creates interaction markets shapes networks as well. Although the interactions themselves might be primarily focused on building solidarity, competition for limited attention space shapes the possibilities for building solidarity. Privileged network position is determined by early and enduring patterns of interactions with those who occupy a central position in a network. Once gained, central positions are maintained through enduring patterns of interaction with contemporaries who are similarly advantaged by early connections to preeminent figures in a network (Collins 1998). Parties illustrate this dynamic in concrete terms. If we are popular, we feel the burden of choice, as we cannot talk to everyone at once. If we are not popular, we feel the effort required to get ourselves into a conversation. From a more macroview, this dynamic crystallizes into status positions within networks and the law of small numbers that Collins (1998) described.

Although Collins illustrated the process of networks and the competition for attention space in the development of philosophy and prominent figures in philosophy, a process that involves patterns that unfold over many lifetimes, we could presume that the same process would unfold more quickly in other sorts of network. Newcomers to a social network who are able to build enduring patterns of interactions with those at the center of the social network will be ensured a better opportunity for taking up that central attention space. Once involved, sustaining relationships

with others who have similarly privileged access helps to maintain one's position as a person hosts will invite to their parties. Philosophers with privileged positions have the potential to generate creative ideas that are meaningful for a large number of philosophers because they are exposed to multiple "hot" ideas and their position endows them with the EE necessary for combining these ideas in new and interesting ways (Collins 1998). Similarly, popular people have the potential to be funny or good conversationalists because they have access to the latest goings-on in the scene and their positions endow them with the EE to take risks and initiate interactions.

In ritual theory, networks are based in interaction, thus they have less of a thinglike quality than they do in other network approaches. The meaningful network for each moment is determined by the context of the interaction. Enemies in one situation become friends in others. New neighbors invited to a party might be at the periphery of a party until the activation of another network connection by a partygoer reveals the once outsider to be closer to the center of an entirely different but situationally relevant network. Histories of relationships and affiliations are network potential that might be realized in a particular interaction. Collins' (1998) example of how philosophers' preeminence is not only determined by the networks that they emerge out of, but the networks that flow out of them, illustrates the contingent interaction-bound quality of network relations.

Collins (2004:396) claimed that network analysis is "too glib about the content of ties" and argued that the patterns of EE that are associated with a tie are a much more powerful predictor of the social implications of the tie than just the presence or absence of a tie. For example, it is likely that the advantageous weak ties and ties that bridge structural holes (Burt 1992; Granovetter 1973) are high EE ties at the periphery of networks, between unlikely and infrequent connections, or over long distances (Collins 2004). Not only the emotional, but also the symbolic content of the tie is important. Collins argued that in most cases, symbols have little meaning other than as cultural capital that facilitates access to certain networks and certain types of interaction. I would add that this is mostly true for the center of the network. At the periphery, where network members encounter those outside the network, the cultural or ideological content associated with past affiliations can be a powerful force in shaping interactions. For example, although missionaries might be driven by indirect strategies to maximize solidarity with their sending community, their ideological commitments that embody that indirect drive toward solidarity become a determining force in missionaries' interactions, at least until their networks affiliation or position shifts. Thus, cultural dissemination is not just the product of network relations; at the periphery, symbolic content also shapes relations.

SMALL GROUPS

Goffman (1967) did not focus on the unfolding of the interaction order across situations. If he had, he would have had access to observing the dynamics of a particular type of network: the small group. Small groups are self-referential patterns of interaction that involve routine face-to-face interaction among more than two members. We can learn much about other levels of social life from observing groups because, like the interaction order, we can actually see the process of a group in action. We cannot see the self in operation except through introspection, which presents certain methodological limitations; for example, there is no way to gain similar access to other selves for the sake of comparison. Likewise, we cannot see networks directly; thus, when studying them, we have the same limitations that we encounter when we use survey data: We have to rely on theory and measurements to try to understand a reality that we can never directly see.

Groups, on the other hand, are processes that offer unparalleled opportunities for observation. Groups are a particular type of network, and, like the self, groups are systems that are grounded in the interaction order and emerge out of the history of interactions within the constraints of a changing environment over time. Thus, we can assume that groups share some of the same general dynamics as the self and other types of network. Rather than relying on pieced-together data from a series of moments or a single moment—methods that often lead us to more static views of social life—observing groups over time reveals highly dynamic processes. The theory Summers-Effler (2004c) generated out of her comparative ethnographic study of group dynamics highlights the role of change and movement in group processes, even in times of stability.

Groups are focused around activity, around doing and accomplishing things. We can think of the shared goal, implicit or explicit, as the everyday ideology of the group. The tasks might be focused on meeting the needs of family members, on organizing and carrying out social functions that keep group members together, or on meeting some external goal. Regardless of how abstract or concrete or how trivial or significant, shared ideological demands require groups to face the challenge of coordinating activity to accomplish tasks. A group's day-to-day ideological demands create a shared focus of attention. The environmental context of this focus filters the articulated abstract ideology of the group, so that a group's day-to-day goals are related directly to its environmental context and only indirectly to its abstract goals.

The day-to-day goals generate challenges and mundane responsibilities. When the challenges are met successfully, they lead to a sense of expansion and an increase in EE. The more intense challenges demand focus and are thus more emotionally intense. High-risk activity either culminates in success or failure or it can cause group burnout if consequences are indeterminate for extended periods of time. When goals are not met, the group fails, leading to a sense of contraction and a loss of EE. Mundane responsibilities also drain the groups, but in a less drastic way than do incidents of failure. The groups that Summers-Effler observed engaged in recovery rituals to maintain enthusiasm and minimize a sense of contraction. The groups' successes and failures were dramatic and attention grabbing, but the cycle of mundane drain and recovery rituals created the rhythm of everyday life. By looking at groups in this way, we can anticipate where and when the disruption of the continuity of involvement lays—during failure and mundane activity when enthusiasm is low and group members are more likely to be pulled into subgroups or competing groups (Summers-Effler 2004c).

The emotional consequences of successes, failures, and mundane drain mark symbols in their interactional environment with emotional significance. As with individuals, a group draws on these symbols to anticipate positive interactions and avoid draining interactions. Over time, a group develops shared expectations for future interactions. This is the group's style—its specific culture and emotional tone. Eliasoph and Lichterman (2003) defined group style as a group's shared grounds for interaction and suggested that rather than reflecting abstract commonly held values, group style emerges within the group. By looking at patterns of interaction and emotion within the two groups that Summers-Effler studied, she observed that ritual interaction is an important mechanism in the production of group style.

The shared expectations for future interaction, or group style, form a pattern that, although ever-changing in response to changes in the interaction environment, constitutes the rhythm of daily life within these groups. Similar to the way passengers in a car turning a corner all correct their balance at the same time to compensate for the change in the environment, group members learn to shift interactions in different ways in response to changes in their environment. Because it takes time to share enough history with the groups to learn this rhythm, these implicit shared expectations mark an invisible boundary between insiders and outsiders. The ways in which group members are with each other, in which they see, understand, and strategize in response to

their environment, are constructed through shared history. This construction has objective roots in the direct relationship between the structure of interaction and emotional consequences. The development of meaningful symbols over time in the form of personal and group style renders this direct connection less direct. Although group style is directly responsive to the environment, it lags behind current contexts because it develops as an increasingly complex strategy until repeated harsh failure requires the complete dismissal of the strategy.

The groups' emotionally based shared expectations supported the groups in the face of their challenges and gave them tools for dealing with failure and mundane responsibilities. These expectations also fed back into the groups' larger ideologies and goals, although they were only indirectly connected to them. The symbols that a group can call on during an encounter come from its history of prior interactions. New symbols can also be created if an interaction is at least moderately successful (Collins 2004), but these new symbols are still tied to the history of interaction that has been experienced before. In order to anticipate a group's style, one would have to know far more than its ideological orientation and ultimate goal. Style emerges from interaction within a group's specific interactional environment. This does not mean that interactions and group styles are entirely unpredictable, only that one would need access to the group's interactional history in order to predict either.

If we look only at the content and not the dynamic process that generated the content, we learn primarily about the specific history of the group rather than understanding the continually adapting dynamic that will enable us to make predictions about how changes in the environment would affect the group. At any one given point, a similar group style in different groups might reflect different conditions, because where the groups come from affects when they stay and where they will go. Stability hides the fluidity of group style; changes in the environment might be dampened for a time by expectations. Only if we pay attention to the different dynamics that produce temporarily similar group styles will we be able to anticipate how and under what circumstances the styles of the groups are likely to diverge.

CONSTRAINTS ON THE INTERACTION ORDER

The interaction order is the only place where social life actually happens, so every other social dynamic can be traced back to this realm. Although asserting that the interaction order is primary, we have seen throughout this chapter that, once formed, systems that emerge out of tension between the interaction order and other constraining conditions loop back and constrain the interaction order. All other levels of systems are a function of time, so time is the most basic constraint on the interaction order. History is the principal artifact of time, and we can see that history ultimately structures the moment through shaping material and cultural conditions and limits as well as cycles of interaction. History matters because it brings us here, within these physical parameters, with these expectations, interacting with others who have expectations as well.

History determines our access to and reliance on particular material resources. Collins (2004) noted that there are often material conditions necessary for caring out IRCs. The availability of resources to bring people together, such as places to meet, money (Summers-Effler 2004c), and biological needs (Summers-Effler 2004a), all impinge upon the interaction order. Durkheim (1995) emphasized material constraints in the other direction, stating that people must break from sacred ritual activity to engage in the profane, mundane, and material activity required to physically sustain individuals and groups. Thus, despite the *sui generis* demands of the interaction order, material conditions can support or undermine the conditions that generate rituals and limit the capacity for individuals to remain involved in ritual activity.

We inherit not only our material conditions from history but our cultural conditions as well. Durkheim stated that beyond the emotional forces of collective effervescence there are forces embodied in the techniques we use: "We speak a language we did not create; we use instruments we did not invent; we claim rights we did not establish; each generation inherits a treasury of knowledge that it did not itself amass; and so on" (1995:214). Similarly, Rawls (1987) pointed out that whereas Goffman describes order as the product of commitment to a shared set of expectations, the expectations are obviously not all, or even primarily, generated by social structure. These shared expectations are in large part generated on a local level through a history of interactions. Collins (2004) detailed how cultural capital limits the potential for interaction ritual as relevant symbols must match up in order for the potential for an interaction ritual to develop. Summers-Effler (2004) argued that expectations generate a cultural lag, which generates history and limits the determining power of the situation. Thus, culture, in the form of symbols circulated in networks, groups, and minds, constrains the interaction order.

History not only constrains the interaction order through the material and cultural conditions that limit any particular interaction, but it also shapes the rhythm of interactions. If we take the microview, like Goffman, we see interactions. If we take a larger view, we see networks of interactions. If we watch the process of interaction in motion over time, we see cycles of focused ritual interaction. In their writing on ritual, Durkheim, Goffman, and Collins at least implicitly acknowledged that rituals have cycles: beginnings, peaks, and ends. Collins (2004) stated that we reach a satiation point and then lose focus and enthusiasm for the ritual. Goffman (1959) detailed the ways people begin and end ritual interactions, but Durkheim (1995) told us the most about why we move in and out of focused interaction. He states that although we are attracted to ritual, the need to tend to material concerns that require individual or unfocused interaction means that we must move between these sacred and profane times just as we move between sacred and profane activities.

My ethnographic observation of groups supports Durkheim's claims about the need for regular periods of mundane downtime to sustain groups. Groups are composed of an interaction cycle in which intense ritual is followed by periods of mundane unfocused activity, which, if the group is in a stable pattern, will be followed by a similar intense ritual period. Mundane backstage activity is the downside of the interaction cycle. Activities such as washing dishes, sealing envelopes, cooking dinner, and all types of backstage unfocused interaction (Goffman 1959, 1967), are examples of required mundane activity. In unfocused interactions people rely on already established expectations to lubricate the social interaction that is required but not the primary purpose or focus of group activity. During these times, people have to negotiate appropriate meanings because they are not completely pulled into the moment.

Other forces beyond material and mundane needs pull people out of ritual moments. The pattern-seeking orientation of selves and groups can conflict with particularly intense or excessive ritual involvement. As discussed above, selves and groups are not only EE seeking but also pattern seeking, for it is the ability to anticipate that enables purposeful action on both the individual and group levels. If rituals become too intense or last too long, they can undermine the history of expectations that brought the individual or group to the ritual in the first place. Individuals and groups seek a sense of expansion, but if a situation demands expansion that is too quick or too extensive, the self or the group itself is threatened. This point at which ritual begins to have diminishing returns is what Collins (2004) referred to as satiation and Scheff (1990) referred to as engulfment. Not only the push and pull of resources but also the limits of satiation and the motivation to avoid engulfment create a cycle between intense focused interaction ritual and backstage, unfocused, mundane activity.

The potential for positive interaction is not only measured by EE resources and correct match of cultural capital but also by timing, by being in a similar place in interaction cycles (Summers-Effler 2004c). Interaction is like successfully jumping into twirling double-dutch jump ropes. One needs to have more than the energy and knowledge; one must also have the appropriate timing to successfully enter. If you look at the *process* of interaction moving through time from a macroperspective, you see not only network connections but also that these network connections would be *pulsating* (Summers-Effler 2004c). At certain intervals, there are some connections, and at other, times there are others. The pulsing connections are the moments of interaction and the rhythm and emotion that hold the encounter together. The time in between the pulse is the downtime, when intensity is low, focus is diffuse, and people are running on past histories of solidarity and EE. The emerging context, determined by both past histories of interaction under varied conditions and the current conditions of the moment, determines whether the pulse will remain at the same rhythm with the same components or whether the components will be pulled toward other rhythms to create new systems of involvement.

You would also see the center setting the rhythm for a larger portion of the network than the periphery. A periphery position that begins to set the rhythm for a larger swath of interactions is in the process of creating a new network center. So, just as the connecting of emotion to symbols in rituals is the foundation for the diffusion of culture across networks, the role of rhythm is central not only for focusing attention and creating entrainment (Collins 2004) but for larger patterns of interaction timing on the level of interactions, groups, and networks (Summers-Effler 2004c).

Understanding the ritual cycles and more macrorhythms of interactions gives us a better picture of how networks, groups, and teams transform. Patterns do not shift or end only when symbols fail to match up or when EE levels are so low that potentially successful interactions are not initiated; they also shift with shifting rhythms of interaction cycles. In her research on groups, Summers-Effler (2004c) found that being out of sync is a major cause of interaction failure. People are embedded in multiple networks at once, and alternate patterns can temporarily or permanently exert more force, pulling one or more potential interactants out of sync with another. Those who are "on" when others are "off" can move toward other opportunities for "on" interaction, leading others into being "on," or they can be experienced as irritating and inappropriate by those who are in a down phase of the interaction cycle.

I have been discussing the self, networks, and small groups as systems that emerge from the primary level of social life—the interaction order that is organized by interaction rituals. Self-organizing systems arise from the interaction of a large number of factors. These systems are open, which means that they exchange energy, matter, or information with their environment. Systems that are open form patterns over time, but they interact with outside influences (Kelso 1995). If we are going to claim to understand how a pattern works (e.g., the relationship between ideology and daily practice), we have to be able to handle two problems: how a given pattern persists under various environmental conditions (its stability) and how it adjusts to changing internal or external conditions (its adaptability) (Kelso 1995).

Systems are composed of elements pulled into relationships with each other through the constraints of local contexts. Systems are only sustained in motion (in the social realm, the motivation to maximize EE provides this forward momentum), so fluidity and change are presumed. From this focus on dynamic processes of interaction patterns, a group, network, or even personality is not a stable structure that endures until it fails. Rather, all such entities are a product of continual creation that under certain conditions gives off the impression of stability. In reality, the process of change or failure is not fundamentally different from the process of stability; only the outcome is different.

Over time, systems learn by adjusting to their changing context. The longer the history of a system, the more nuanced the dynamics of interaction between component elements—in this case, the expectations for interaction. This complexity continues until the system blows apart and the elements are taken up by new systems. A systems is not static; it is only through the relationship between its component elements that a system has an emergent force of its own. The end of interaction between elements is the end of the emergent force. If we only look at particular substantive issues, we either see a stable system or how a stable system changes in response to a particular shift in context. Through comparison, however, we can gain insight into the basic processes of systems that organize many different substantive outcomes.

The boundaries of the systems are established by failures and the defensive strategies that result. Proactive strategies are eminently flexible and thus represent a good match between expectations and environment. The proactive response to unanticipated success or mild setbacks is loose, flexible, and open-ended. Alternately, defensive strategies are persistent unless radically ruptured (see above section on the self). As discussed above, they often endure beyond their usefulness. However, as Abbott (2001:277) pointed out, the entities that emerge from patterns with "thingness" properties do not need to be optimal or particularly functional. Because of their durability, defensive strategies offer the firmest foundation for the development of patterns. Defensive strategies derived from patterns of avoidance offer the greatest resistance to environmental conditions. I am suggesting that social entities, like groups or networks, are entities because they offer resistance in the flow of activity—they are eddies in the social stream. They become an obstacle in the structure from which they emerge. This is the reason why they have what Abbott (2001:277) referred to as "causal authority."

CONCLUSION

Ritual approaches to emotion place interaction rituals and their emotional consequences at the center of social life. Durkheim laid the framework for understanding the role of ritual in creating the emotional and cultural foundations of society. Goffman applied Durkheim's perspective to the level of face-to-face interaction in day-to-day life and illustrated how the same ritual forces create the interaction order. Collins built on Goffman by specifying the mechanisms that create rituals and the emotional and cognitive products of rituals. This enabled him to detail how interaction rituals form chains over time, a process that creates networks and more macropatterns of social life over time. In doing so, Collins generated one of the most promising visions for connecting microlevel and macrolevel of social life. Polillo and Summers-Effler have built on ritual theory to further specify the dynamics within the self, and Summers-Effler has also detailed the dynamics of small groups.

Using the past work specifying the properties and dynamics of rituals, recent work has examined how other emergent levels of social life constrain interaction rituals. Interaction markets constrain opportunities for interaction rituals and thus shape networks (Collins 2004). The rhythm of interaction, not just within rituals but between rituals, also shapes interaction opportunities, as do the demands and limits of material life (Summers-Effler 2004a, 2004c). The conservative pattern-seeking processes of the self, within-self dynamics, and the process of thinking generate culture and constrain interaction as well (Polillo 2004; Summers-Effler 2004a). Finally, by approaching the interaction order and the second- and third-order dynamics derived from the interaction order as emergent systems whose emergent patterns comprise elements of other levels of systems, we can develop predictive theory about causal relationships between social levels (Summers-Effler 2004c).

The work of understanding the role of time and history in interaction rituals has just begun. We still do not know much about the relationship among ritual intensity, the amount of EE generated, and the duration of EE. Nor do we know much about emotion and the experience of time. Because the other levels of social life that emerge out of the interaction order are generated through time, future work on the process of time and other levels of social life will no doubt inform each other. Because the primary focus up to now has been on the mechanisms of rituals, we have only just begun to explore the cyclical nature of social life. The image of network connections pulsing on varying cycles suggests that some connections are only intermittently possible or relevant, creating new problems for ritual theory to solve. We occupy multiple network positions; we are shy in some places, aggressively enthusiastic in others. This also complicates the image of a chain of interactions. Although the effects of one interaction carry over into the next interaction, we are also tied to history, anticipation, and particular contexts. Interaction ritual chains might be too linear an image to capture how contingent and embedded patterns of interaction emerge from the past and unfold into the future.

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CHAPTER 7

Symbolic Interactionism, Inequality, and Emotions

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Emotions are central to everyday interactions. They motivate behavior, shape agency, contribute to self-control and social control, and bear the traces of systemic disadvantage. Our chapter explores the contributions of symbolic interactionism as a theoretical perspective in sociological studies of emotions. We focus on how an interactionist analysis of emotions has added immeasurably to our understanding of social interaction and, in particular, of social inequality. Not all interactionist research, including interactionist studies of emotion, focuses on inequality. However, in tracking the patterns of social interaction to their troubling consequences, we heed the advice of an early interactionist, Blumer (1969), who urged symbolic interactionist researchers to pay attention to the obdurate reality—the empirical patterns—going on around us. The obdurate reality that we observe is replete with examples of inequality and resistance in people's ongoing social interactions. Thus, our goal is to present an overview of the territory that symbolic interaction and sociological studies of emotions share and then analyze the most challenging direction for interactionist research: understanding the reproduction of inequality.

In the following pages, we locate symbolic interactionism in the field of sociology of emotions and explain the theoretical foundations and basic premises of symbolic interactionism. Using

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